

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 15-25 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. A version with markings to show changes made follows page 7. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the third segment contains a well, and the connector contains at least one outlet for residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment to flow from the third segment to the second segment, whereby the residual liquid accumulating in the well of said third segment flows more rapidly when the second segment is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size. Support for this amendment can be found at page 7, lines 3-6 of the specification and in FIGS. 2 and 3 of the drawings.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by US 1,366,789 to Graham. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Graham, United States Patent No. 1,366,789 (hereinafter "Graham"), discloses a liquid receptacle attachment having a base and a plurality of projections extending to substantially the same distance therefrom and adapted to form closures for receptacles having mouths of different sizes. The projections are sized to engage a small, medium, or large-necked bottle, as needed.

Claim 1 of the application on appeal requires that the third segment 16 of the connector 10 contain at least one outlet 52, 52a for residual liquid, from which outlet residue from the third segment can flow. At page 7, lines 3-6 of the specification, it is stated:

The connector 10 preferably contains residue outlets 52 and 52a, in order to allow liquid residue accumulating in the well of the

third segment 16 to flow more rapidly when the second segment 14 is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size.

These residue outlets are neither disclosed nor suggested by Graham. The outlet opening 22 disclosed in Graham enables fluid to flow out of a container through a hose, pipe, or tube to a subsequent destination. The residue outlets 52, 52a recited in claim 1 of this application enable residual fluid accumulating in the well of the third segment to flow from the third segment to the second segment more rapidly when the second segment is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size. Graham does not disclose or suggest any means for residual fluid to be drained from one segment to another segment of the stopple shown therein.

The outlet opening 22 disclosed in Graham is designed to communicate with a hose, pipe, or tube, whereby fluid flows from a container through the outlet opening 22 and then into the tube. See page 2, column 1, lines 7-11 of Graham. The residue outlets 52 and 52a are not designed to communicate with a hose, pipe, or tube. In Graham, the outlet opening 22 extending through the tubular projection 23 allows liquid to flow from the container 10 into and through the hose, pipe, or tube 15. The outlet opening 23 does not allow liquid to flow substantially laterally from the inner circle of the body 16 to the middle circle of the body 16. (The receptacle engaging projections 17, 18, and 19 of the body 16 form three concentric circles of the body 16.) In the connector of the present application, the residue outlets 52, 52a allow liquid to flow substantially laterally from the inner segment 16 to the middle segment 14. See page 7, lines 3-6 of the specification. To enable this substantially lateral flow of liquid, the residue outlets 52, 52a are placed in a different position relative to the outlet 22 shown in Graham. For these reasons, Graham does not anticipate claims 1-11.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US 1,366,789 to Graham in view of US 4,614,437 to Buehler. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Buehler, United States Patent No. 4,614,437 (hereinafter "Buehler"), discloses a mixing container and an adapter to interconnect the mixing container to a second container to permit intermixing of the contents of the containers. The mixing container has a neck with a plurality of raised circumferential ribs thereon. The adapter has a central cylindrical sleeve. A first end of the sleeve is surrounded by a cylindrical skirt. The interior surface of the first end of the sleeve has a plurality of circumferential grooves which enable the adapter to engage the ribs on the neck of the mixing container. The interior surface of the cylindrical skirt has a screw thread to enable the adapter to engage a conventional threaded container neck. The opposite, or second end, end of the sleeve has a cutting sleeve therein, concentric with the sleeve. The cutting sleeve is adapted to pierce a seal on the mixing container.

Claim 12 depends from claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the third segment contains a well, and the connector contains at least one outlet for residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment to flow from the third segment to the second segment, whereby the residual liquid accumulating in the well of said third segment flows more rapidly when the second segment is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size. Neither Graham nor Buehler discloses or suggests any means for residual fluid to be drained from one segment to another segment. For this reason, the combination of Graham and Buehler does not render claim 12 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claims 13 and 15-25 stand rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over US 1,366,789 to Graham in view of US 4,614,437 to Buehler in view of US 4,010,756 to DuMont et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

DuMont et al., United States Patent No. 4,010,756 (hereinafter "DuMont et al."), discloses a surgical electrode consisting of an insulated stainless steel wire having needles conductively affixed at one or both ends, at least one needle having a blunt end with a straight shank and having a weakened zone between the straight shank and the opposite

pointed end of the needle whereby the pointed end may be snapped off and the straight shank used as an electrical jack for connection to a pacemaker or similar electric current generating or monitoring device.

Claim 13 depends from claim 12, which depends from claim 1.

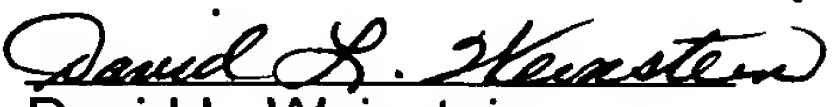
Claim 1 has been amended to specify that the third segment contains a well, and the connector contains at least one outlet for residual liquid accumulating in the well of the third segment to flow from the third segment to the second segment, whereby the residual liquid accumulating in the well of said third segment flows more rapidly when the second segment is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size. None of Graham, Buehler, DuMont et al. discloses or suggests any means for residual fluid to be drained from one segment to another segment. For this reason, the combination of Graham, Buehler, and DuMont et al. does not render claim 13 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claim 15 is equivalent to original claim 13. DuMont et al. relates to the field of surgical electrodes, which are used for stimulation of the heart. DuMont et al. does not relate to the field of liquid receptacle attachments, the field with which the present invention is concerned. The art area of DuMont et al. is not analogous to the art area of this invention. Thus, the rejection based on the combination of DuMont et al. and Graham is a hindsight reconstruction of the prior art, which reconstruction could have been perceived only after seeing the Applicants' disclosure. It is impermissible to use the inventor's disclosure as a "road map" for selecting and combining prior art disclosures. It is impermissible to use the claimed invention as an instruction manual or "template" to piece together the teachings of the prior art so that the claimed invention is rendered obvious. One cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the prior art to deprecate the claimed invention. For this reason, the combination of DuMont et al. and Graham is impermissible, and, consequently, that combination cannot render claims 15-25 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that claims 1-13 and 15-25 are in condition for allowance, and official Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Kindly rewrite claim 1 as follows:

1. (Twice amended) A connector suitable for use with a plurality of containers, said connector comprising:

a first segment capable of connecting a container having a mouth having a relatively large diameter;

a second segment capable of connecting a container having a mouth having a relatively intermediate diameter; and

a third segment capable of connecting a container having a mouth having a relatively small diameter, wherein said third segment contains a well, said connector containing at least one outlet for residual liquid accumulating in said well of said third segment to flow from said third segment to said second segment, whereby said residual liquid accumulating in said well of said third segment flows more rapidly when said second segment is attached to a container having a mouth having a diameter of relatively intermediate size [from which outlet residue from said third segment can flow].